

The Vancouver Secretariat

April 2026 edition



Overview

1. **Evolution & Purpose:** To organize and oversee the process of transforming the Vancouver Declaration into action.
2. **Rationale:** Governments need this body, and there are significant advantages to establishing it now while governments can still shape the contours of their engagement.
3. **Objectives:** Members will pick and choose from the secretariat's offerings to supplement their CDR policy priorities and activities as needed.
4. **Structure & Function:** Determined by the bylaws (a draft version has been developed).
5. **Finance & Sustainability:** Members will contribute a set amount toward the sustainability of this organization, with equitable levels to be determined by the group. Additional funding will be provided by philanthropies as available.

1. Evolution & Purpose

In the fall of 2025, fifteen senior government policy experts from within CDRANet convened online as the Vancouver Transition Committee (VTC). The purpose of the VTC was to examine how best to transition the Vancouver Declaration from aspiration to global action and to identify the issues the future Vancouver Secretariat will need to address. Participants emphasized that successful implementation will require building bridges among key stakeholders—including researchers, industry leaders, civil society, and national governments—to ensure carbon removal technologies are deployed safely, effectively, and equitably. Overcoming political inertia will also be critical. To maintain momentum toward the initial conference for this initiative, the group encouraged pairing the launch with concrete deliverables that demonstrate the initiative's practical value. Ultimately, the goal is to develop a focused, transparent, and achievable roadmap for atmospheric carbon removal—not a diffuse set of aspirational objectives, but a practical plan for drawing down atmospheric CO₂ grounded in real action.

To continue advancing this work, a broader engagement phase—referred to as the Vancouver Process—will begin by mid-2026. This phase will bring together participating governments and other stakeholders, alongside advisors, to identify the most realistic and effective pathways for collaboration under the Vancouver Declaration. An early milestone in this process will be the establishment of the Vancouver Secretariat: a fully funded, appropriately staffed body designed to support coordination and implementation across the participating community. While the Vancouver Process can proceed without full funding for the Secretariat, securing adequate resources will significantly strengthen its ability to serve this high-level international effort.

2. Rationale

The Vancouver Declaration Secretariat will serve as the neutral coordination body supporting voluntary, nonbinding collaboration among governments on CDR. Its role is to translate high-level political intent into practical cooperation—across policy design, science coordination, technology pathways, finance readiness, and regional initiatives—while preserving flexibility, sovereignty, and optionality. But why this body, and why now?

- **Governments have crossed the coordination threshold**
Governments are no longer asking whether CDR will be needed, but how they will govern it responsibly. Officials are beginning to compare approaches, identify gaps, and explore collaboration. The Vancouver Declaration fills this gap, but the Declaration’s work needs to be coordinated. Without a neutral coordination body, early momentum risks dissipating into bilateral conversations, duplicative pilots, and inconsistent standards. Funding now preserves institutional memory and converts exploratory dialogue into durable cooperation.
- **The pre-Secretariat window is where leverage is highest and costs are lowest**
The 2026 Vancouver Process is intentionally lightweight: small staff, focused outputs, rapid learning. This is precisely the point where modest, catalytic funding has outsized impact. If support waits until after governments formalize structures, the Secretariat will be forced to retrofit coordination after paths diverge. Funding now allows the Secretariat to be designed with governments, not imposed on them, avoiding later friction, inefficiency, and mistrust.
- **Markets aren’t evolving fast enough**
Private CDR activity is accelerating unevenly across jurisdictions, technologies, and standards. Governments are under pressure to respond, but most lack comparative policy insight, shared guardrails, or venues for peer learning. Absent coordination, governments will default to fragmented rules or solutions that don’t leverage or scale. The Secretariat provides a forum for governments to learn together and scale together.
- **No existing institution is positioned to do this job**
UN bodies, standards organizations, and market platforms all play important roles—but none are structured to facilitate voluntary, government-to-government coordination across the full CDR landscape. The Secretariat is intentionally non-binding, non-promotional, technology-neutral, and government-centered. Funding now avoids the vacuum being filled by actors whose mandates, incentives, or credibility do not align with public-interest governance.
- **Early funders are catalytic**
Supporting the Secretariat now enables a global transition to get underway from market-led solutions to government-led. This is a sea-change in our approach to

CDR, and the success of this new approach will catalyze investment in CDR, catalyze participation in CDR policy, and make real the full potential of CDR for halting global warming. Demonstrating the effectiveness of this approach through early investment will be key to the Secretariat’s success, so it can be properly staffed to meet the moment.

- **Delay has asymmetric downside**

If funding is delayed, governments will disengage quietly, coordination will become harder to recover, and norms will be set elsewhere, by default. If funding moves now, governments retain agency, cooperation remains flexible, and the cost of course-correction stays low.

3. Objectives

The objectives of both the Vancouver Process and the Vancouver Secretariat will be to connect stakeholders; convene discussions on issues of shared need and interest—such as MRV policy—while leveraging existing expertise and resources; de-risk early action by building networks of first movers; collect and communicate best practices; provide outreach materials and engagement support; and develop concrete action plans that respond to the needs of participating members. Multiple pathways for engagement will be available, as outlined in the Structure & Function (Bylaws) section.

4. Structure & Function

January 2026 Draft Bylaws

Article I – Purpose

The Vancouver Declaration Secretariat (“the Secretariat”) exists to facilitate voluntary, non-binding collaboration among participating governments on the policy, institutional, and governance challenges associated with carbon dioxide removal (CDR). The Secretariat does not advocate, negotiate, regulate, or bind its participants.

Article II – Nature of the Secretariat

1. The Secretariat is facilitative, not directive.
2. It has no independent policy agenda.
3. It acts at the request of, and for the benefit of, participating governments.
4. Participation in all Secretariat-supported activities is voluntary and opt-in.

Article III – Participation

1. Participation is open to governments that express interest in the Vancouver Declaration.
2. No participant is required to engage in all activities.
3. Different groups of participants may engage at different depths and speeds (“variable geometry”).
4. There is no requirement for consensus for activities to proceed.

Article IV – Activities

The Secretariat may support, at the request of participants:

1. Information sharing and peer learning
2. Policy comparison and synthesis
3. Convening of interested participants
4. Time-bound working groups or task forces
5. Capture and dissemination of lessons learned

Article V – Initiation of Workstreams

Workstreams may be initiated through:

1. A request from two or more participating governments; or
2. A time-limited pilot proposed by the Secretariat and taken up voluntarily.

No vote or consensus approval is required.

Article VI – Governance and Oversight

1. The Secretariat may be advised by a Government Steering Group, if established.
2. The Steering Group:
 - provides strategic guidance
 - reflects participant priorities
 - does not exercise fiduciary control
3. The Steering Group does not require unanimity.

Article VII – Hosting and Legal Status

1. The Secretariat may be hosted by an external organization for administrative and legal purposes.
2. Hosting does not confer agenda-setting authority.
3. Any change in hosting or legal status shall be participant-driven.

Article VIII – Relationship to Other Bodies

1. The Secretariat does not replace or supersede existing initiatives.
2. It may draw on external expertise, including expert networks such as CDRANet, without delegating governance authority.
3. The Secretariat serves as a coordination interface, not a gatekeeper.

Article IX – Amendment and Evolution

These Terms may evolve based on participant experience and demand. No amendment shall create binding obligations without explicit participant agreement.

5. Finance & Sustainability

Year 1: Vancouver Process (2026)

Staffing: 3 × \$150k = \$450k

Administrative & engagement costs = \$50k

Focus: Inventory priorities, identify capacity gaps, design initial structure, catalyze financial support

Total Year 1: \$500k

Year 2: Operational Secretariat (2027)

Staffing: 6 × \$150k = \$900k

CDR27 conference support = \$250k

Administrative & engagement costs = \$250k

Focus: Program delivery, expanded government participation, global visibility

Total Year 2: \$1.4m

Year 3: Scaling & Global Coordination (2028)

Staffing: 12 × \$150k = \$1.8m

CDR28 conference support = \$250k

Administrative & engagement costs = \$500k

Focus: Multiple workstreams, regional initiatives, sustained presence

Total Year 3: \$2.55m

Fiscal Growth

Short term funding will be provided by institutional supporters. Long-term funding will include a mix of institutional and government support, as well as other revenue streams as warranted to ensure capacity.

Hosting

During its initial phase, the Secretariat will operate under the administrative and legal auspices of the Science Communication Institute (SCI), the US-based nonprofit which oversees CDRANet. This hosting arrangement is explicitly transitional and exists solely to provide fiduciary oversight, staffing, and operational continuity while governments determine the Secretariat's long-term institutional home. As set out in the Secretariat's draft bylaws, hosting does not confer agenda-setting authority, and any change in legal status or institutional placement will be participant-driven and may occur as early as Year 2, should governments choose to establish an independent entity or alternative hosting arrangement.